

Executive Summary

State Party	PALESTINE
State, Province or Region	WESTBANK – Hebron/Al-Khalil
Name of Property	Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town

Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

The property is located between the following coordinate points

1	22°30'26.88606"N	35°06'20.02581"E
	X = 159291.4889	Y = 104549.2482
2	22°30'26.93627"N	35°07'45.48203"E
	X = 161733.9760	Y = 104549.2482
3	22°29'32.60843"N	35°06'20.06732"E
	X = 159291.4889	Y = 102879.7496
4	22°29'32.65861"N	35°07'45.51432"E
	X = 161733.9760	Y = 102879.7496

Textual description of the boundary(ies) of the nominated property

Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town is located in the heart of Hebron/Al-Khalil city in the southern part of the Palestine. The town expanded according to sociocultural, political and economic factors, around the focal point that is Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs. The Old Town spreads from east to west as a continuous urban fabric starting at the bottom of Hebron/Al-Khalil valley and ending on its northern slope. The historic centre is divided into two areas: the area around Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of Patriarchs and the area in the south, separated from the latter by the wadi.

The core zone cover the continuous urban fabric which back to the Mamluk and early Ottoman Periods, the boundaries of core zone can be defined by the roads around the continuous fabric from the east, west and south, and the end of the continuous fabric from the north. The core zone is almost entirely protected by surrounding buffer zone which cover the foothills around the core zone inside the municipal boundaries of Hebron - Al-Khalil City, the proposed buffer zone include the immediate vicinities of the core zone and have the highest potential of influence on it.

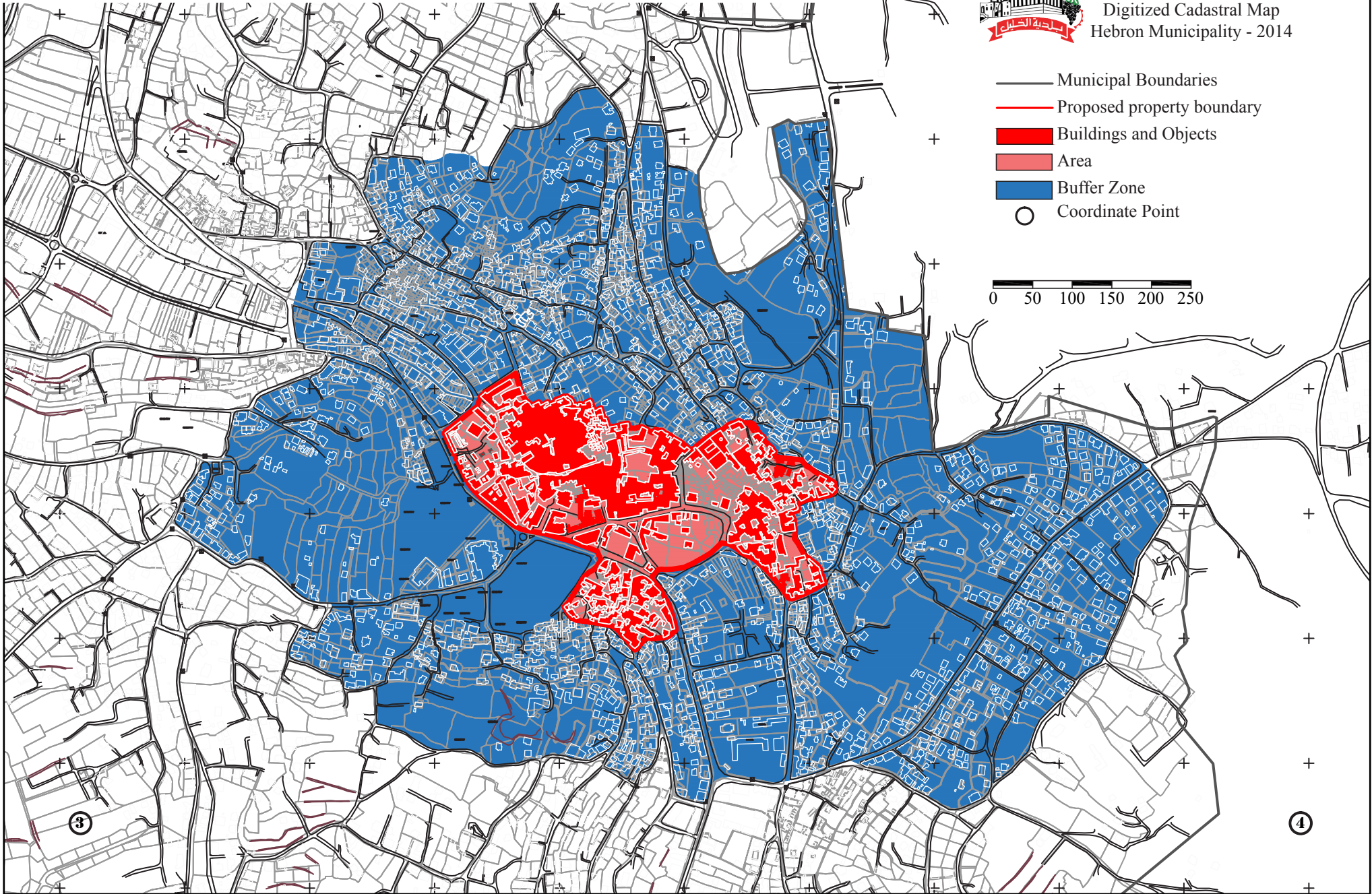
A4 (or "letter") size map of nominated property, showing boundaries and buffer zone



Hebron Old Town
Digitized Cadastral Map
Hebron Municipality - 2014

- Municipal Boundaries
- Proposed property boundary
- Buildings and Objects
- Area
- Buffer Zone
- Coordinate Point

0 50 100 150 200 250



Criteria under which property is nominated

(ii), (iv) and (vi).

Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

a. Brief Synthesis

The nominated property Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town is thought to be one of the oldest cities continuously inhabited in the world. Its numerous ancient, but well-preserved, monuments and buildings bear witness to a rich and prosperous past.

With its 20.6 ha, the nominated property is presenting the continuous fabric which date back to the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods, the property entirely protected by buffer zone (172.8 ha) cover the foot-hills around Hebron/Al-Khlail valley.

The old town expanded on the valley around Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs which is an outstanding example of building illustrates significant stages in human history and one of the main elements shaped the future of Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town. Beliefs, traditions and ideas have been the foundation of town's lifestyle characteristics for many centuries. the location of the town on the main commercial routes in the region was another important factor influenced the town's characteristics. The town became a meeting place for groups coming from different faiths, ethnicities, and backgrounds. This intermixing has added a high degree of socio-economic and cultural exchange throughout the centuries.

The Outstanding Universal Value of Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town is demonstrated in its existence as an outstanding, exceptionally complete and well preserved example of unique urban and architectural characteristics inspired by the human values of Hebron/Al-Khalil community. The main attributes of "Outstanding Universal Value" can be seen within the limits of the old town. These attributes have

been generally preserved, despite the destructions that affected certain districts of the town in 1965 when the Jordanian Ministry of Antiquities decided to expand the piazza in front of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs. Since 1967 the Israeli occupation is imposing security restrictions which threaten the physical integrity of the old town and isolate it from its immediate environment.

The mission of preserving this cultural heritage for future generations will be managed by Hebron Cultural Heritage Preservation Council which is a joint council membered by Hebron/Al-Khalil Municipality, the Ministry of Tourism and antiquities as well as the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee.

b. Justification for Criteria

Cultural Criterion (ii)

The old town represents an outstanding example of a community built around the interchange of human values. Despite the fact that both residents and visitors to the town came from a myriad of different faiths, ethnicities, and backgrounds, they drew inspiration from the same traditions and values, especially those of the Prophet Ibrahim/Abraham who is considered the paradigm of hospitality and generosity, the prophet's spirit of generosity is infused into the culture of Hebron/Al-Khalil. An example is the Al-Takiya Al-Ibrahimiyyah. Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs has been since its creation a source of great inspiration to surrounding communities and their, social, religious and spiritual values. The importance of this sacred place can be seen in the structure of the town. The main roads of the town connect every quarter in Hebron/Al-Khalil to the Haram. The architecture of this remarkable ensemble shows a sedimentation of different cultural influences and styles. Hebron/Al-Khalil is a part of one of the holiest regions of the world for the three monotheistic religions and an important station on the commercial routes in the region, it was a destination for different groups from different cultures, ethnics, religions and professionals.

Needless to say, this intermixing has added a high degree of socio-economic and cultural exchange throughout the centuries. This cultural mosaic is one of Hebron/Al-Khalil's main characteristics.

The town developed as a none-walled town to keep its doors open for all visitors and to preserve its multi-cultural profile. Many of the public buildings in Hebron/Al-Khalil were constructed to accommodate the steady streams of travellers visiting the town. The urban planning of Hebron/Al-Khalil's Old town is a kind of map of its inhabitants' social relations, clearly showing the system of social relationships between inhabitants within each quarter and also the relations between the inhabitants in different quarters within the road system. The urban fabric in the old town is divided into independent quarters, or Hara, which are linked to the public spaces by minor streets and semi-private alleys and dead-end streets. The system of the Hara reflects the variety of ethnic, religious and economic distinctions. The Old Town was divided into three types of neighbourhoods, forming a diverse urban fabric, based on ethnic, religious and professional grouping. This specific structure expressing the interchange of various cultures and ethnic groups within the same space is reflected in the urban fabric of the old town, remarkably preserved until today.

Cultural Criterion (iv)

Hebron/Al Khalil Old Town bears witness to a flourishing town of the Middle East, that experienced its "Golden age" between the 12th and the 15th century. The existing urban structure dates back to the Mamluk period, with a second-story system introduced during the Ottoman period.

The urban and architectural characteristics of Hebron/Al-Khalil's Old Town were influenced by many elements, producing a unique urban fabric and architectural, mainly the presence of Al-Ibahimi

Mosque as one of the most important religious landmarks in the world it is also one of the main elements influenced Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town's urban structure.

Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town is located on the Hebron/Al-Khalil Valley which was one of the factors of Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town growth, due to the availability of water and cultivable land. The valley created for inhabitants new opportunities of work and life which played a crucial role in development and growth. The existence of water sources was also important for building an elaborate water system with aqueducts, big cisterns (birkehs) and fountains in the Old town. As a non-walled town at the edge of the desert, Hebron/Al-Khalil had an elaborate defence system. The continuity of the buildings on the outer edges of the town made it difficult to access the town. A system of hidden nooks and alleyways played also a protective role against foreign intrusion. This system can still be clearly seen from within the old town by examining the road system and the urban structure which are perfectly preserved until today.

The residential parts of the Old Town were built in a hosh system, which represents a unique typology different from the common residential typologies found in other Arab and Islamic cities.

In contrast to the common residential typologies found in other Arab cities (Damascus, Aleppo, Marrakesh, Fez, etc...) organized around inner courts that constitute both the main central distribution space and the centre of family life, the Hebronite hosh is an agglomerate of rooms units or group of rooms (two or three units clustered around a small distribution space) organized according to a tree-shaped system that reproduces the structural pattern of the urban network.

Hence, Hebron/al Khalil Old town is a unique example of an urban structure that has remarkably preserved the historical urban fabric as well as the morphology and residential typologies dating back to the Mamluk period, thus contributing to the visual and structural integrity of the cityscape.

Cultural Criterion (vi)

Thousands of years ago, Hebron/Al-Khalil was a town prophets visited, lived in, and were buried in. Beliefs, traditions and ideas have been the foundation of the lifestyle in this town for many centuries. These enduring values have been carried from one generation to the next. Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs has come to symbolize these very important values, thus perpetuating the importance of Hebron/Al-Khalil for mankind.

c. Statement of Integrity

The boundaries of the proposed site correspond to the boundaries of the continuous fabric of Hebron/Al-Khalil Town during the Mamluk Period. It appears that the settlement moved from Tell Rumeida to the valley near Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/ The Tomb of Patriarchs which became the focal point in the town and strongly influenced its development after the Roman and Byzantine periods.

Whilst Hebron- Al-Khalil Old Town has never been protected by town walls, its limits are well marked thanks to the topography and the “rampart houses” built on the town’s external perimeter, some of which have survived until today. Although some districts corresponding to the extension of the town as from the 19th century are connected to the old centre in terms of historic importance and give it its setting and its context, the main attributes of “Outstanding Universal Value” can be seen within the limits of the old town. These are notably the monumental site of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque/The Tomb of Patriarchs. These attributes have been generally preserved, despite the destructions that affected certain districts of the town in the sixties and particularly since the Israeli Occupation.

d. Statement of Authenticity

According to WHC’s historical cities and Town centers classifica-

tion, Hebron/Al-Khalil Old Town is a sample of inhabited historic cities which developed and continued to develop under the influence of socio-economic and cultural change in the Town while keeping its authenticity.

Since the Mamluk era, the morphological configuration of the old town and the spatial organisation of the urban fabric have remained mostly-unchanged, and the main distinctive attributes have been retained. The authenticity of the urban structure and of the monuments has remained intact. conservation efforts made in the old town since the mid 1990s have to a great extent, preserved the outstanding universal value attributes. The use of traditional materials and techniques in these restoration operations has helped the reactivation of craftsman building trades. Nevertheless, the context is particularly vulnerable due to the political and military situation and the security restrictions imposed by the Israeli Army which threaten the physical integrity of Al-Ibrahimi Mosque /The Tomb of Patriarchs and that of the old town, and isolate it from its immediate environment.

e. Requirements for Protection and Management

The legal protection of the old town is based on the related applied laws in Palestine in the fields of urban planning, tourism and antiquities. at the local level the Hebron/Al-Khlail Municipality developed many plans aims to regulate the building licences within the city and supports the development of cultural and tourism as important components that contribute to enhancing the experience of the visitors coming to the city, and aims to promote the rich diversity of religious, cultural, and historical resources in the governorate. at the same time the related organizations are working on developmental programs, preservation plans, manuals and guidelines to control the preservation interventions according to the international standards.



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